

Praises “surge” strategy that enables withdrawal from Iraq

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – U.S. Rep. Mike Coffman (R-Colorado) today announced his support for President Barack Obama’s new withdrawal plan from Iraq. The plan gives the President flexibility in withdrawing troops while ensuring security forces could be kept in place to aid Iraq’s fragile but developing democracy.

“The President’s plan is a sound reversal of his campaign pledge of expeditiously removing all U.S. troops under a fixed time schedule,” Coffman said. “The plan has a flexible time schedule that will leave in place up to 50,000 U.S. troops who will play a vital role in consolidating and extending the remarkable progress our military has made since 2007.”

Coffman praised the 2007 “surge” strategy that was implemented to develop a stronger U.S. presence in Iraq, and pointed to two major points of the multi-faceted strategy as driving success. First, U.S. ground forces would be shifted to small forward operating bases located inside the communities themselves thus creating a constant security presence. The second involved a successful effort to bring the Sunni Arab insurgents into the political process and turn them against the al Qaeda foreign fighters who were using Iraqi communities as safe havens from which to conduct terrorist operations. Iraq’s recent successful elections give support to President Obama’s withdrawal plan.

“The dramatic success of the ‘surge’ strategy in Iraq has enabled us to move from a discussion about whether the United States could bear the catastrophic consequences of failure in Iraq, to one where we can now contemplate the withdrawal of U.S. military forces,” Coffman said.

Coffman returned home from Iraq, in late March 2006, where he served as a civil affairs officer with the U.S. Marine Corps. He was assigned as part of an effort to help move the political process forward in areas that lacked sufficient security for the Iraqis to do so themselves.

“No doubt, as a member of the House Armed Services Committee, I’ll be monitoring the

situation to make sure that U.S. troop withdrawals correspond to successes on the ground in Iraq,” Coffman concluded. “I’m obviously relieved that the President has a sensible strategy for bringing the war to an end.”